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THE IRON-CLAD FAMILY.

It is well known that the Clads date their origin to what we may call the second period in the life of Adam and Eve, and that they are distributed over the whole of the earth's inhabited surface, with the exception of a few acres in the torrid zone. The Iron-clads are a more recent branch of the race, but are still both ancient and numerous. Powerful and warlike, they have always held their own in the World, and something more; and, indeed, their only declared enemies (although nobody loves them) have been the Hurt Family (already treated of in this *Journal*), who have no chance against them whatever. Resistance upon their part is of course out of the question, and it is even doubtful whether the Iron-clads are generally sensible of their complaints. When a great shriek rises from their united voices, their oppressors affect to be astonished, and to inquire what is the matter. 'Why, who would have thought that one's heel (iron-rimmed, however) would have made such a mark? We really did not know that we were walking over you, or at least we didn't know it was your face! And how very odd that it should have made your nose bleed!'

If anybody had walked over *them*, they would never have felt it, and they do not reflect that everybody is not provided with such impenetrable armour-plating as themselves. Talk of Parrot guns—the greatest gun that ever you set eyes on might practise upon a member of this family at short-range, until he burst himself, without making a dint. Armstrong and Whitworth might lay their heads together in vain for a projectile that would penetrate his shield of self-complacency and egotism. 'Who is flinging these pellets of bread about?' murmurs Hurlothrumbo the giant. 'Is it possible that they are intended for munitions of war?' His movements are like those of a rhinoceros among a litter of sucking-pigs; his little eyes always turned inward in contemplation of his own greatness, see nothing of the frisking little ones, but his vast feet flatten them out with every stride, and not so much as a squeak invades his

ragged ears. 'You don't mean to say that was my doing!' cries he, when the agonised mother at last contrives to draw his attention to the condition of her offspring. 'How indiscreet of them to get in my road!' And the huge earth-shaking beast pursues his way.

But the Iron-clad family are fortunately not all rhinoceroses; many of them are only armadillos. They do no harm, although they are themselves impervious to all weapons. They trot about everywhere in their close-fitting coats-of-mail, no matter whether they are welcome or not, with an assurance that is quite ludicrous. 'How are you, good Mrs Hare?' says one to that poor lady, who, with her weeping leverets, is lamenting the late murder of her harmless spouse, and not at all in a humour for receiving company. 'How are you all? What beautiful weather! How are the crops? How are the turnips?'—so wrapped up in his own object (which is to get a cup of tea, perhaps, or whatever happens to be going), that he does not see how hateful are his commonplaces. Even when she is telling him what has befallen her, he has scarcely patience to listen, his mind being solely intent upon who will be the next most likely folks to satisfy his little cravings. 'Dead, did you say? Dear me, dear me, dear me: then where am I to get my tea?'

The armadillo thinks it very hard that people should get torn to pieces so inopportunistically. 'Surely, if anybody has the right to be annoyed in the matter, it is he! What the Hare family can have to complain of in *his* conduct, he can't conceive! He expressed himself very kindly upon what had occurred, he is sure—very kindly, and even recommended a cup of tea.'

You can no more quarrel with the armadillo than with a man who wants to borrow money of you. He will take anything that is going (as I have said) except offence; that is the only thing which he thinks it better to give than to receive. 'Why we should misunderstand one another, and thus unnecessarily make a battle-field of life, which, for his part, he prefers to consider a beautiful green space, suitable for healthful sports, is to him incomprehensible!'

If those philosophers be correct who define Happiness as freedom from pain, the Iron-clads are blessed indeed. They do not mind partaking as freely as they can of all the joys of their fellow-creatures, while their sorrows never touch them. Their digestion is never put out by virtuous indignation at any wrong; their pulses are never quickened or their blood heated by any enthusiasms, social, political, artistic, or religious. Without being philanthropic, they are extremely charitable, at least in so far as expression of opinion goes. Not being in the least affected by the assassination or robbery of other people, they are very lenient to criminals. They pride themselves upon contemplating dispassionately the most outrageous acts of wickedness. They pronounce Garrotting—when the incident occurs to their friends—to be the natural bent of great physical powers unsublimed by educational training; and speak of Arson (when it is their neighbours' ricks to which the lucifer has been applied) as a practice alike injudicious and reprehensible. They take no pleasure in the misfortunes of society, it is true; but they will not stir a finger to remove them. They would not, like Nero, fiddle while their metropolis was burning; but neither would they trouble themselves so much as to cry 'Fire!' so long as a ladder was placed at their own bedroom window, and a powerful engine in the immediate vicinity prepared to play upon their premises.

All these, whether rhinoceroses or armadillos, are the Iron-clads proper, whom Nature herself has furnished with impenetrable mail. But besides these, there are a much larger class of people who have adopted the same style of clothing from necessity, whose very profession compels them to assume it, but who, out of that particular calling, are persons with the like feelings as ourselves, or, at all events, have been so at one time, before their mail, from long use, began to stick to them, and became identical with their own proper skin. Of these, the principal examples, beside the Borrower (already spoken of), and his near kinsman the Beggar, are the Bore, the too familiar Servant, the Professional Swindler, and the Poor Relation. Perhaps I may add to these the habitual Liar, whom custom has so hardened to openly expressed disbelief and contradiction, that he is unconscious of the insult they imply. The most striking specimen of this sort whom I ever met with was a certain American colonel (as he called himself), whose mission it was to keep a light-house off the extreme northern coast of his beloved country, and in whose company bad weather compelled me to remain for many hours. This gallant officer's falsehoods were so astounding, that the muscles of my countenance refused to remain fixed while he narrated them, notwithstanding that I was his guest, and am naturally of a polite disposition. 'You don't credit me, stranger, I reckon,' he would occasionally observe; 'well, now I will tell you something which occurred to myself, and to the veracity of which I will pledge my personal honour.' Whereupon he would tell a more incredible story even than that which had excited my mirth. He lied about his 'natyve' land, of course; but he also lied about everything on earth, and even in the sea. There were a great number of water-fowl about the spot, and among them certain loons, which are always difficult to

shoot. 'Now,' said he, 'there is a loon yonder which I have shot at about forty thousand times, but on which I have now determined to waste no more government powder. He don't even trouble himself to dive like the rest, but merely jumps forward as you fire. After several months' continuous shooting at this wary fowl, I hit upon a device; sicee, *I forelaid him*. I laid the gun in such a manner as to allow for his ingenious stratagem. Then what do you think took place? I give you my word of honour as an officer and a gentleman that that loon *jumped backwards*.'

Nowhere does this particular branch of the Iron-clad family flourish so luxuriantly as in the United States. The features of both the narrator and the listener (whose turn to tell his story will presently come about) are grave and immobile, as though they were both at church; neither has the slightest sense of shame, or cares one cent for the opinion of his acquaintance. Each listens to the other, not from courtesy, but in the expectation that the other will presently listen to him. A friend of mine, who was travelling with me in the Northern States, amused me greatly by the readiness with which he adopted the manners of the natives in this particular, and furnished himself with weapons out of their own armoury. They wearied us with impertinent questions upon every subject, from the object of our journey to the price of our waistcoat buttons; and these remarks were parried in the true Iron-clad manner. The Britisher never moved a muscle, no matter to what sceptical glances, or even observations, he might be exposed.

'You are rich, stranger,' said one; 'you have no need to speculate, I guess, in any notions?'

'You are right there,' my friend replied; 'we are as rich as Rothschild.'

'Now, what may you be going to our New York for, stranger?'

'Well, if we like it, we shall buy it,' returned the other calmly.

From this observation, our interlocutor began to gather, I fancy, that we did not wish to be subject to his inquiries, for he observed with seriousness: 'Now, look you, let us trade: I promise I will not ask you any more questions, since you cut up so rough, provided only that you answer me this one: "How did you lose your arm?"' My friend had had the misfortune to leave a limb in the Crimea, and the circumstance had awakened a great deal of curiosity while travelling in the great republic.

'Well,' replied he, 'if you promise that, I will tell you how I lost my arm. It was Bit Off. There!'

This, of course, excited the Yankee to the utmost, and we left him in a perfect fever.

There is generally something humorous about the habitual Liar, which greatly mitigates his peculiarities, and he is almost always good-tempered: and upon the whole, although a most unprincipled character, he may be considered to be the least offensive of the Iron-clads. Now, the Bore, although less vicious in a moral point of view, is infinitely more disagreeable. I have often thought that his name might with equal meaning be spelt Boar. He pursues his stupid stories and experiences with the same pertinacity with which that unpleasant beast of the forest prods the earth in search of food: upon any subject which he does not himself originate, he has no remark to utter

beyond a dissatisfied grant; while, as for making him conscious that he is in your way, by any missile known to civilised man, the attempt is well known to be hopeless.

The spoiled Domestic, or too familiar Servant, may be thought, perhaps, too small an evil to be here catalogued with his betters—or his 'worsers'—and yet he has been a pest of society as long as there have been servants at all. We are even warned against him, lest he become our master, in the Scriptures themselves. There is no limit of degree to his coolness—he is below zero altogether, although, unfortunately, not beneath our contempt, for his behaviour is irritating and annoying. One does not like to set him down one's self, and yet his employer cannot be persuaded to undertake that most necessary duty. Beyond a certain thickness, our armour-plated vessels will not float; but the specific gravity of the favour of a foolish master is such that it will sustain any burden of this nature. The most amusing example of it I ever witnessed was at breakfast in a certain great country-house, where the butler brought in the letters, and handed them to his noble master with a running commentary upon each. 'One from Mrs Pechell, my lord, and one from Sir Henry Carstairs; but this one'—here he held up a foreign-post letter against the light, and tried to read through the thin envelope—'I really can't tell who it comes from, my lord.'

The Professional Swindler can scarcely be an Iron-clad by birth. It is absolutely necessary to the success of his calling that he should be at least cognizant of the feelings of his fellow-creatures, in order that he may use them for his own ends; nay, he ought to be acquainted with their most secret springs of action, and the most subtle influences that sway their lives. On the other hand, he must have parted with every vestige of self-respect, and be prepared to be taken at any moment through the public streets handcuffed to a policeman in uniform. I have no personal acquaintance with any member of this branch of the Iron-clad Family myself—although I should think he would be a most interesting subject of study, and well worth knowing—but an uncle of mine had a curious experience of a gentleman in this line of business. There was a certain public dinner to be given at a county town to its representative in parliament, and among the invited guests was the relative I speak of. He went down to this entertainment by railway from London, starting from the Paddington station. In the same carriage with him was a strange gentleman, who seemed, by his conversation, to be bound upon the same errand; indeed, he produced a card of invitation to the banquet, and appeared to be intimately acquainted with the people and politics of the locality in question. My uncle, however, who was a reserved man, was by no means favourably impressed with his companion. He disliked the manner in which he pressed his conversation upon him, and especially the familiar style in which he addressed him when some fellow-passengers joined them at Slough. He told me that he felt obliged to treat this person with some hauteur—wherefrom I gather, judging by what I know of my respected relative, that he must have been extremely rude to him; but this line of conduct was quite unavailing. His new acquaintance stuck to him like a brother; or, perhaps, considering what family ties are often

composed of, it would be more graphic to say like a bur. He got into the same fly with him, when they arrived at their destination, and got out at the same hotel. My uncle had no occasion to nurse his wrath, which some new impertinence and familiarity upon the part of this individual kept sufficiently warm; but he in vain attempted, in his turn, to rouse the anger of the other. He was either the most good-natured man in the world, or was ignorant of the language of insult. At the public dinner, my relative imagined that he had got rid of this incubus, as he was not visible among the guests; but hardly had all sat down, when a waiter, pointing to a chair next to his own, the position of which intimated that it was 'reserved,' remarked obsequiously: 'Your friend is rather late, sir; but I have kept this seat according to his directions.' In another minute the dreadful stranger had taken his seat at my uncle's right, and was making conversation—or rather monologue, for my injured relative refused to answer him one word. He watched his neighbour, however, very narrowly, and before the entertainment came to a close, found ample opportunity for vengeance. When the last course was finished, and the things were being cleared away, my uncle stuck his dessert-spoon in his button-hole as though it had been a lily of the valley.

'Sir,' said the waiter, 'excuse me, but you have—ahem—I'm sorry to trouble you, but I am answerable for the plate.'

'But why,' urged my uncle, 'should I not carry away one spoon, as a memento of this interesting occasion, when this gentleman here (pointing to his neighbour) has got his pocket full of spoons and forks?' With that he rose, and seizing his too familiar acquaintance by the collar, shook him until the stolen plate rattled in his tail-pockets like Apollo's arrows in their quiver.

There was of course rather a scene; but the swindler, although caught in the very act, behaved with such admirable coolness as almost redeemed his crime in my uncle's eyes. Nothing had become him throughout that entertainment, in which he had so striven to please, as the leaving of it, which he did in custody, but with the air of a good man, whose actions had been grievously misunderstood, but who could yet forgive his enemies. 'He was not so much an Iron-clad,' remarked my caustic relative, 'as iron solid.'

But, after all, there is no offshoot of this extraordinary family more remarkable than the Poor Relation, inasmuch as, though impenetrable as any, he calls forth the pity of all beholders. For the rest of his race, nobody entertains one spark of sympathy, but for this unhappy person, whom years of neglect and insolence have rendered callous to slight and contumely, who does not feel commiseration? To see him enter the room of some more fortunate member of his clan, opening the door only just so wide as to admit his person, and with an apology for his presence speaking from each submissive feature, is a most painful spectacle, until one has learned to know that he himself suffers no pain. The Eton boy who has been 'swished' seven times has no more reason to fear the infliction of the rod. The cuticle has by that time adapted itself, and with the exception of a certain deliberation in the choice of a chair (which results from habit alone), there is nothing to distinguish the martyr (however recent has been the infliction

of his torture) from any companion whose peccadilloes (for boys always *deserve flogging*) have been better concealed. By this same beneficent arrangement—or the principle of Natural Selection, if you prefer to think so—the Poor Relation becomes as thick-skinned as his rich kinsman the rhinoceros, in whose house we so often meet him. He knows that he is not welcome; but he has got over that; and so long as he gets his meat and drink, it matters little that they are thrown to him, and that with a very bad grace. This sycophancy awakens our contempt when it is seen in any man of able body who can procure bread for himself by stone-breaking, for the days of led-captains are past; but when the Poor Relation is a female, friendless, and, as generally happens, not very young, we entertain for her a profound pity. It is long before we can persuade ourselves that she is an Iron-clad, as invulnerable in her way as her ungracious host; that her mail is proof against all slights, as his is against all good-feeling. Yet this is as often as not the case.

I remember a certain provincial rhinoceros, who lived in a huge red house in a county town, in which he was banker, brewer, and agent for a great territorial lord. He was so puffed up by these various dignities, and the emoluments attached to them, that were it not for his strong and horny hide, he would perhaps have burst. To listen to the way in which he laid down the law after dinner upon the questions of Bullion, Malt, and the Landed Interest, was well worth the humiliation of dining in a company of vulgar flatterers, such as always fed at his table. For once and a way, it was a great treat; but how it could have been endured week after week—for he was very hospitable after his dreadful manner—is more than any man, not being an Iron-clad, can tell. His relatives and dependents were very numerous, and received not so much invitations as ‘commands’ to attend his banquets, such as those which are issued by Her Majesty the Queen. There were some who were asked every week, some but once a month, and some only on particular festivals, such as Christmas Day, Lady Day (he always honoured that anniversary), Ash-Wednesday (for he was a sort of man who revelled in parsnips), and Easter Monday. His guests could be all reached by messenger, for their humble dwellings clustered about his great house like a Norman hamlet about the castle of their seigneur, and that messenger was welcomed like an angel. Of all these folks, there was but one who interested me at all, except as an unpleasant study from human nature; this was a little old maiden lady, whose meek manners and silver hair had earned for her the title of the White Mouse. She was a very distant cousin of the rhinoceros, and was only commanded to the Red House upon the high days and holidays I have mentioned, and their rarity greatly enhanced to her the value of those invitations. I had been long compelled to admit to myself that the White Mouse was an Iron-clad, but still I liked her; and if there was a person left in all the world to whom the White Mouse would have confided anything, I knew it would have been to me.

Nevertheless, I was surprised when she called upon me on the day before Michaelmas Day, and having requested a private interview, burst sudden as a fountain into tears. I could not have imagined

that this good lady, whom I had seen publicly slighted in a manner that would have sent three-fourths of her sex into hysterics, but at which she had only smiled, had possessed such a thing as a lachrymal duct.

‘Oh, do read this,’ said she, bringing out a letter, on the envelope of which I recognised the handwriting of the rhinoceros, ‘and tell me what I am to do, and how I am to make it up with him. He has asked me to dine with him on Michaelmas Day for twenty years, and now, see, there is not a word about it in his letter from first to last.’

There certainly was not a word about dinner; on the contrary, it was evident that the old wretch was angry with the poor little Mouse for some real or imagined cause. It was a stiff and rather high-flown letter (especially ill adapted for its recipient), with scraps of Latin in it (which were Greek to her); but it was easy for anybody to see that the writer was intentionally rude and disagreeable. If I had not known she was an Iron-clad, I should have addressed her thus: ‘My dear madam, here is an excellent opportunity for severing an unpleasant connection. I have often seen this rhinoceros behave scornfully and cruelly towards you. True, you are not rich, but you have enough to live upon; why, then, should you put up any longer with the rudenesses of a man who has never given you anything in his life, I believe, beyond roast goose and apple sauce?’ But knowing my White Mouse as I did, I took a very different line.

‘The letter is certainly disagreeable,’ said I, ‘but then that’s only his way. He is angry with you, but he means you to come after all.’

‘Oh, do you think so?’ cries the poor creature, clasping her hands, and looking at me like some erring suppliant at the Peri who keeps the gate of Paradise—‘do you really think so?’

‘Yes,’ returned I gravely, ‘for what else can he mean by this *c. g. ?*’

I guessed that she had never heard of *exempti gratia*, and I guessed right. ‘This is his arch way of inviting you, my dear madam, you may depend upon it that: *c. g.* stands for “Eat Goose;” I am perfectly certain of it.’

‘Bless me,’ cried the White Mouse, ‘why, of course, it does. How very stupid of me!’

And this little impenetrable Iron-clad actually went and dined with the rhinoceros the next day upon that meagre hint of welcome, and was not, I dare say, treated much worse than usual. Surely never had White Mouse so thick a skin as she.

RUN DOWN.

It was four o’clock in the afternoon—not a breath stirred the surface of the water; rude Boreas had left the maritime scene so long, that it was difficult to imagine that he would ever reappear in the character of blustering railer again; a white-hot June sun burned in the cloudless sky with such a clear glow that you almost expected the still unrippled sea to simmer presently, as we steamed through the Strait of Messina. On the right, the coast, rugged and romantic, softened gradually landwards into long low hills, which swelled higher and higher, until they were lost in a distant horizon of sky and upland; on the left rose Etna, piled precipitous crag on crag from the sea to the heavens; and from the summit, a thin clear wreath of smoke floated ever upwards—the incense burning on a

Titan altar. The *Cleopatra*—long, fine, and graceful—passed for a thing of beauty in duller waters and under skies more subdued in tone; but her presence here seemed to be as incongruous as the intrusion of even the holiest man, unpurified by death, into Paradise.

It seemed cruel and wanton to crack that lake of glass with our sharp swift beak; to desecrate the calm silence by the thud of our engines and the churning of our screw; to defile the pure fairy-like scene with volumes of black tenacious coal-smoke, as we surged on, relentless as the first great sorrow of life, darkening and marring what was bright and serene.

The *Cleopatra* was one of the B. B. Company's steamers, which had been hired by government as a transport, and she was now taking troops home to England—not a particularly romantic set of passengers; prone, indeed, to song, laughter, and ship-quoits, especially in smooth water, yet quiet enough now. Wherever a dozen soldiers are gathered together, one is sure to be titivating his accoutrements, so there were several men languidly dabbling in pipe-clay and blacking; but with these exceptions—necessary sacrifices to Average, that Destiny of the moderns—the occupiers of the forward part of the vessel lay about the deck, or lounged over the bulwarks, whole or semi somnolent, the most wakeful puffing their pipes in the dreamy way in which tobacco is mostly to be enjoyed; nor did the crew of the steamer seem any more lively than the soldiers; even the look-out man gave one the impression of having but one eye open, and that turned inwards, for the purpose of metaphysical self-communing. If all hands had been served with an opium pill apiece half an hour previously, they could hardly have been more drowsy. An awning was spread over the quarter-deck, and the officers under it were not so much overcome as those who were exposed to the fierce rays of the sun, but they, too, were remarkably silent. One or two were reading, one writing; the surgeon, quartermaster, and a couple of captains played a rubber on a horse-rug spread on the deck; but the majority lounged about, watching the panorama change as we glided, musing.

There is a popular air which was jingling in more than one head that afternoon; the last notes heard in England; the tune to which they had stepped with firm, springy, measured tread, but slowly throbbing hearts, from the station to the quay:

Then be the weather what it may—

Windy, wet, or stormy—

I always will return again

To the girl I left behind me.

Poor young Spooner, he is humming that tune inwardly, and the heart-wounds bleed a bit again; yet it is several months since he saw *her* marriage with Another announced in a stale copy of the *Times*, and he thought that he had got over all care for the jilt. But now that he is almost flying back to the land that holds her, he cannot help remembering her tears, her choking sobs, her vows of eternal constancy—his own undoubting confidence.

Lounging near him, gazing down upon the water which he does not see, sucking mechanically at a monster cigar which he does not taste, is Trevyllian, the senior captain. He too sees the large loving eyes, the transparent complexion, the slight form of 'the girl he left behind him.' Alas!

she has gone on a longer journey than his, and never, never can *she* 'return' to him.

Johnstone, too, is lost in anxious reverie. The young wife whom the exigencies of the service forced him to leave behind was pretty gay, fond of admiration, not overwise—an affectionate little thing, but volatile, impressionable. Her letters had of late altered sadly from the loving though incoherent epistles which had at first cheered him on his bereaved way; if they had at the same time shewed signs of a strengthening intellect, this would not have been of so much importance, but they were as silly as ever, only lacking the genuine feeling which redeemed the earlier ones.

I always will return again

To the girl I left behind me;

and let us hope she will stop for me.

The skipper and government agent were below, studying a chart of the strait; there were only two persons on deck who appeared to be thoroughly wide awake, and these were the men at the wheel, who stood ready, hand on spoke, watchful eye on compass, checking the ship if she swerved but a hairbreadth from her course. I ought, perhaps, to except the colonel, who sat on a camp-stool sketching an outline of Etna on the back of a letter, an occupation to which, however, he brought the smallest amount of exertion compatible with the production of the faintest work of art.

Suddenly, as if a spell had been broken, there was a stir in the vessel, a confused murmur, a rushing to and fro, and then came a cry from forward: 'Port, port, hard a port!' And the wheel spun round in the strong hands of the steersmen; while those who seized the shrouds, and sprang on the bulwarks, could see a two-masted felucca floating in our path: another second, and we touched her right amidships. There was no jerk, no arrest of our course; the frail felucca appeared to melt before us like snow opposing water. The masts fell gracefully away, and then a crushed and tangled wreck flashed past our starboard quarter. Three men and a boy were clinging to it, shrieking loudly; a fifth was struggling in the water, either unable to swim, entangled in a rope, or injured by a blow; he had much ado to keep his head above the surface, and he cried to the Virgin just as a child in a like quandary might to its mother. He was barely three seconds alongside of us, but that short space of time sufficed the colonel to snatch a life-buoy, which lay near the wheel, and send it spinning like a quoit well forward of the drowning man. It was the best snap shot I ever saw made in my life, for the circular yellow contrivance came down right over the poor fellow's head, and we just had the satisfaction to see his hands grasp it before he was only a speck in the distance; for the ship rushed on like an arrow, and had left her victims a quarter of a mile in her wake before her course could be arrested or altered. Then we circled very slowly back, as it appeared even to us; to the unfortunate fishermen the minutes must have been hours. Two or three of the officers, who had glasses on deck with them, reported progress to the rest.

'She is deeper in the water. The men have left her. They can all swim, thank God! She is sinking: there she goes! By Heaven, she has drawn one of them down with her! No, all right; there he is again.'

We got up with them at last: a boat was lowered presently, and picked them all up safely; and the moment they were hauled in, they left off praying, and began swearing, tearing their hair, and gesticulating vehemently. They became even more violent when the boat's crew commenced pulling towards the Sicilian shore, and demanded in loud tones, and with most unpleasant imprecations, to be taken on to Messina.

'I say, captain,' said the colonel to the skipper, 'surely the least we can do is to land the poor devils where they wish; besides, I should like to make up a little purse for them.'

'Impossible, colonel,' replied the other, shaking his head; 'I must get through the strait by daylight, and cannot go out of my course to touch at Messina. We are losing valuable time as it is, and I do not half like it; it will be a near thing.'

'And so after having run them down, destroyed their property, reduced them to beggary, taken from them the means of getting a livelihood, we are about to set them ashore on a wild, perhaps inhospitable coast, far from their homes, without clothes, food, or money, half-drowned. It is a cruel and wicked thing, done without my consent.'

The constitution of a troop-ship is of a most singular nature; when I say singular, I mean triple, for there are three potentates on board, neither of whom acknowledges the authority of the other two. There is the officer in command of the troops, who, of course, is only a passenger; but a passenger with some eight hundred armed men to do his bidding, who could simply eat up captain and crew, and not get a good mouthful apiece, is apt to consider himself the most important personage in the little floating kingdom. Then there is the normal and proper captain of the vessel, the servant of the Company to which it belongs, and who is let out with it as much as the driver is with a hired coach; he, of course, sets his back up if the commanding officer tries to take hold of the reins. The third potentate is the government agent, generally a lieutenant in the navy, appointed to—to—to—what on earth, or on water rather, his functions are, I do not know; anyhow, he has a good deal of authority, and can make himself so disagreeable if he chooses, that a wise skipper keeps on friendly terms with him. The captain of the *Cleopatra* was a man quite fit to be trusted with the care of his own interests in this shrewd planet, and he and the G. A. pulled together in capital time, so that when the indignant colonel appealed to the latter to signal the boat to return, that we might at all events discover how to send some future aid to the Sicilian fishermen, he only endorsed the skipper's opinion about the importance of getting through the strait before nightfall, and the impossibility of taking the unfortunates into Messina.

In due time, the boat returned, was hoisted, and we once more rushed forward on our selfish, cowardly way. The passengers were for some time sorry and indignant; but presently dinner, delayed far beyond the customary hour, made a strong diversion; and after the meal, we passed between Scylla and Charybdis, and had to rub up our classical memories. Then the glorious Mediterranean sunset, of which neither pen nor paint-brush can convey any idea to one who has not witnessed it, attracted all our attention; our indignation at an injustice which did not affect our

personal comfort soon grew very faint; and as we daily approached nearer and nearer to our own homes, we forgot the hearths which we had desolated in our impatient course; and the matter, I believe, was never reported, and no inquiry made.

How did the accident happen? The unfortunate fishermen, lying becalmed in the strait, were taking their siesta; our look-out man was asleep, or was engaged in lighting his pipe, or cutting up tobacco, or some other nautical diversion. I hope that he was punished in some way. I do not know what can be done to offending sailors in the merchant service; it would ease my mind to think that that fellow had had a couple of dozen, but I fear that nothing of the sort befell him. I wish, too, that the pocket of the skipper had been somewhat mulcted, not being able to imagine such very gross negligence and carelessness, unless the discipline of the ship was habitually lax; but this idea may be unjust. At anyrate, the cannny captain got off scot-free; his true reason for putting the shipwrecked sailors on shore at once, instead of taking them on board as they desired, being, that he wished to prevent their discovering the name of the vessel which had run them down, and recovering damages from the Company; and in this, I regret to say, he was successful—the unfortunates never got a farthing.

I wonder whether these 'accidents' are of common occurrence? whether many small, insignificant craft are annually smashed by our sharp, swift monsters of the deep? whether Britannia, in the process of ruling the waves, often strikes her pen through luggers and feluccas? and if she does, whether the crews are always rescued from drowning?

THE NURSING PROFESSION IN ENGLAND.

ONE of the mysterious places which the common world thinks of (if at all) with awe and a vague wonder, is a great hospital. Few of the citizens of London know much about those glorious establishments, which save so many lives, relieve so much misery, and send out physicians and surgeons qualified to carry the same benefits all over the kingdom, and to remote parts of the world, where they take charge of the health of our colonists or our soldiers. Even the county infirmaries, which are conspicuous objects near most of our provincial capitals, are looked at from without with something of that reverence with which we regard the unknown when it stands straight before us. Of the fifty or hundred thousand inhabitants of any provincial city, how many, we should like to know, have ever been inside the long and lofty brick edifice which stands on a rising-ground, at the junction between town and country? Certain municipal officers visit it periodically, and kind gentlemen and ladies who have recommended patients, go now and then to see how their protégés get on. These, and a clergyman here and there, are nearly all who can relate, from their own observation, what life looks like within the great hospital.

On the whole, all this is very well. The public are not wanted in that place. Miss Nightingale has somewhere said that society knows little, can know little, and had better not know much of what goes on within the hospital; and there are plain reasons for this wise saying, if the

place is to be kept quiet enough for the patients, and regular and retired enough for the nurses to do their duty properly. Any of us who may remember our first visits to one of these vast buildings, may still, perhaps, think chiefly of the quietness of the place. When the great bell at the entrance had been rung, and the porter had appeared, and we had marched through long, wide passages, and mounted the stairs, and got into a corridor which had large numbered doors on either hand, and when one of these doors opened to us, and we saw an immeasurable ward before us, with little beds at intervals along both sides, all alike with their checked linen hangings, and each with a patient in it, with large eyes, which gaze at you as you enter—when you pass through all this, the uppermost sensation is of the profound quiet. Everything looks new and wonderful—the whiteness of the floors, the loftiness of the ceilings, the vast size of the windows, the quantity of light, and the miraculous cleanliness of everything, from the beds and the patients to the kettle on the hob of the head-nurse; but the noiseless tread of the nurse, and the dress which does not rustle, and the gentle movement in the wide spaces of the ward, and the low voices of those who speak, make the strongest impression of all. This peculiarity may go far to account for the prejudice of poor people against the hospital. They are accustomed to close rooms, very hot and very dark, and to the noise of children, and to loud voices close at hand; and they may naturally dread the restraint of hospital stillness, till they find what the comfort of it is in real illness. It is obvious that this atmosphere of calm, this means of repose, could no longer be secured if once the world was let in, and if the life of the hospital was laid open to eyes that had no particular business there. Proper visitation, as a safeguard, being provided, and the friends of patients being admitted at fixed hours, the fewer persons enter the wards the better, even if poor people get superstitious notions in consequence, and the public can only give its money, and if—what is of more importance—there exists a constant difficulty in procuring nurses enough who are duly qualified for the work.

It really seems as if every nurse in all hospitals had become so by some accident or other. Till quite lately, we seldom or never heard of any young woman becoming a nurse because it was a natural occupation, and the one she preferred wherein to earn her bread. Either she had been a patient, or some acquaintance connected with the hospital had advised her; or the doctor had been inquiring for nurses in her neighbourhood; and the one thing which had not happened was, that nursing was understood to be a desirable occupation, affording all needful comforts and good pay, and in all ways more secure, more considered in society, and more profitable than the employments in which our countrywomen are competing down to starvation point. It will be otherwise in a little while. During the last dozen years the health of society has become a great public and private interest and concern; and if fewer doctors should eventually be wanted, as a natural result of sanitary improvement, there will be an increased demand for nurses. Sanitary improvement implies good nursing in workhouses, a higher order of attendance in hospitals, more care of sick children, due tendance in epidemic seasons and cases, and a complete new

organisation of nursing in our colonies and in India. Of our military and naval hospitals, I am not going to speak, civil society being quite enough to attend to on this occasion. I will only observe, that while there need be, and should be, no female nurses in regimental hospitals, general hospitals, the military establishments as much as the civil, will always require women as official nurses. Military and naval general hospitals help to increase the demand, to meet which there is nothing like a supply. The frequent presence of ill-conditioned women in almost every staff of hospital nurses, has always shewn that the supply was far short of the demand; but now it is with a feeling very like despair that persons who are aware of the truth look abroad through society, and see the need of hundreds, nay, even of thousands of qualified nurses, while the women of England, Scotland, and Ireland seem to have no intention and no desire to present themselves to supply the want. The fact is, that so little is known about the matter, that the vocation obtains little or no notice in the programmes, circulars, speeches, and tracts issued on behalf of the employment of women, though every other occupation is overstocked, and few or none are so remunerative.

In order to clear up our ideas a little, let us see what sort of nurses we have. Thus we may form some notion of what is wanted, and how women of different ranks, qualities, and views should set about studying the profession.

From the time of the revival of the activity of the church and of Robert Southey's speculations on social subjects, we have heard a good deal of the religious sisterhoods on the continent, some of whom devoted themselves to the care of the sick. The natural consequence was, that religious houses of the same character were established in various parts of the kingdom. There is no need to say much of them here, for the simple reason that, with scarcely an exception, they decline any connection with secular institutions, and address themselves altogether to women of their own way of thinking and feeling—not proposing to become general schools of nursing, but to act in their own little world—under whatever denomination that section of religious life may range itself. There is another reason why these Homes do not require our notice here—their practice does not perfectly correspond with the general secular notion of what nursing ought to be. It is often very admirable in its way, and the devotedness and tenderness of the sisters are as beautiful as anything can be; but their view of their function does not coincide with that of the medical profession, nor with that of society generally. The religious object is the first with them, and they are even more solicitous for the welfare of the patient's soul than for that of his body; whereas the rest of the world is of opinion that the spiritual condition is the clergyman's province, and that the nurse's business is with the bodily health. In hospitals, it is so decidedly declared by the doctors that, for the patients' sake, religious ministrations must be left to the chaplain, and certain peculiarities resulting from a conventual mode of life so stand in the way of the most effective kind of nursing, that nursing orders, as we may call them, may, generally speaking, be considered out of the question for our great hospitals, and for private service also, except within the range of special religious sympathy.

In any hospital, the physician and surgeon will at any time prefer the paid working-woman, with her straightforward business-like ways, to the most anxious of devotees, with her heart full of spiritual solicitudes, and that tinge of prudery which the conventual life inevitably generates. There is one Home ranked with this class which differs essentially from the rest, in having connected itself with the great secular institution, King's College Hospital. This, St John's House, Norfolk Street, London, has its training-school at that hospital, where hospital and private nurses learn their business to the best advantage; and the House supplies the whole of the nursing the hospital requires. By the last Report (1864) it appears that there are thirty-two sisters, and sixty-one nurses and probationers; but it is believed that the admirable superintendent is always under embarrassment and stress, for want of more sisters of the requisite quality. The principle of this House, and of most or all of the sisterhoods, I believe, is to keep the nurses they train, to answer applications public and private. The Nightingale Fund trustees proceed in the other way. They have a training-school (of which more presently), and send forth their pupils as fast as they can train them; the one condition they impose in return for the benefit being, that the women shall serve for five years in a hospital or a poor-law union, at the beginning of their career.

Though we leave the sisterhoods out of our review, we shall have to head our classification with gentlewomen. There is not now the rage for a hospital life among ladies which we heard so much of at the time of the Crimean war, and just afterwards; but there are still ladies devoted to the profession of nursing, women of sense, who believe they can be more useful in that way than in any other, and who have ability and inclination for the transaction of its serious business. This is well; for the cultivation, the ideas, the habits, and the manners of a gentlewoman are requisite for the most important functions of the profession—the office of superintendent or matron of a training-school or a hospital. As yet, the difficulty is extreme of finding women qualified for an administrative post of such responsibility and importance; and it need not be told how great the mischief is of the position being held by persons lacking the faculty and the temper specially required for the superintendence and training of large establishments, and companies of pupil-nurses. One result is, that a duly-qualified lady can now command almost any terms. While an educated woman in other employments obtains a bare maintenance, precarious and unhonoured, she here holds a position of great consideration and authority, of the deepest interest, and one which sets her above worldly care.

Some people have an idea that the matron or superintendent has simply to take charge of the hospital linen, and to look to the cookery, and the cleaning of the wards, and to know what patients come in and go out, and so forth; and such an office they think is a comfortable berth for a poor widow of the middle class, or for a middle-aged single woman who has not education enough to be a governess. A furnished parlour, bed and board, coal and candle, and twenty or thirty pounds a year, are accounted a real good thing for such widows and spinsters; and some of us may remem-

ber what a competition there was, on occasion of any vacancy, in days when nobody thought of a training in nursing on the one hand, and in administration on the other, being a necessary preparation for the place. The case is very much altered now, happily. At one London hospital, the matron has a house and two hundred pounds a year. At another, the training matron has two hundred and fifty pounds a year, lodging, fuel, part board, and a maid-servant. Other hospitals give a house, coals, beer, and a servant. If the qualified women could be found, they would be appointed by hundreds, both at home and in the colonies and India.

But, to become qualified, these ladies must have passed through training—training in nursing, in hospital cookery, in housekeeping on a large scale, and in organising and conducting a new order of women, of a peculiarly difficult kind of household.

If not in some Home, and under some sisterhood, the matron must have learned the professional part of this training in a hospital. For such purposes, ladies may be welcomed to a place in the corps of hospital nurses. Otherwise, they had perhaps better be absent. It is hardly a wise thing, even if it is feasible, for ladies to devote themselves to hospital nursing as a permanent occupation. There can be no distinction made between ladies and women of lower origin in such a service; and the trials to gentlewomen are incessant and very great. The jealousies rankling under the apparent absolute equality in the hospital service; the necessity of instant, constant, unreserved obedience to orders, both from the doctors and the matron; the menial offices required at all times, and for any number of assigned patients; and, through it all, the hard bodily labour—trying to working-women, and overwhelming to gentlewomen—all these are reasons why ladies who desire to devote their lives to nursing should place themselves where they can have private practice—in which, after all, they may be even more useful than in public establishments, where their presence embarrasses the doctors, disturbs the matron, and ruffles the course of things with the ordinary paid nurses.

Is there, then, no gradation in the hospital organisation? Is the matron to be a lady of ability and cultivation, who has passed through the training for a specific object, while all the rest are commonplace working-women, who would be cooks or housemaids if they were not here? Is there no stage between?

Yes; there is the body of head-nurses. If an ordinary nurse deserves promotion to the government of a ward and its staff of attendants, she will be sure to obtain it, for there is a sad scarcity of good candidates for this office, as for those above and below; but it is conceivable that a middle class gentlewoman might fill this post with satisfaction, if she has weathered the difficulties of the training. Whether by early education or otherwise, the head-nurse must be a superior person, so far possessed of the matron's qualifications as to rule her ward and her staff wisely and kindly, and to act intelligently with, as well as under, the doctors, and at the same time skilled to perform the nicer operations of nursing with her own hands. The dressings and minor surgical applications are her business; and she has the responsibility of all the administration of medicine. She has, in short, the

immediate charge of the sick, like the nurses below her, with some of the authority and responsibility of the matron above her. It is strange that there is not a wider choice of fit candidates for such an office—fairly remunerated as it is. Those who know best declare, that the proper pay for a really good head-nurse is simply her weight in gold. As it is, she has, in our great London hospitals, two rooms, coal and candle, partial diet, and other privileges, and a salary of from fifty pounds to seventy pounds a year. Sometimes there is in addition the supreme benefit—the one thing which would fill the profession presently, if it could be universally instituted, and which even now draws well wherever it is given—a pension. It is not within the choice of most London hospitals whether to give pensions or not. They depend more or less on annual subscriptions, and the managers cannot pledge themselves to future expenditure; but, wherever it is found possible, the conditions of the whole case seem to be altered. In a profession so wearing to body and mind as that of skilled nursing, the prospect of a pension after a certain term of years of good service is found to be the strongest inducement yet proposed for the consideration of the right sort of women.

Next come the ordinary nurses, divided into the two classes of night and day nurses. There is some difference in the methods of different hospitals, and in the treatment of the attendants; and therefore, instead of describing any one, I may convey a truer idea of the mode of life by a general sketch of what the women's lives are or are professed to be.

Each class of nurse should be on duty, in ordinary circumstances, twelve hours in the twenty-four. She must have eight hours for sleep, and four more are only a reasonable allowance for meals, open-air exercise, and small personal concerns, such as sewing, reading, letter-writing, &c. The night-nurse is subject to instant dismissal if found asleep; and, on the other hand, she must not indulge in any employment which may be too interesting—as novel-reading while on duty, or making or mending her own clothes; she should understand that that sort of work must be done out of the hospital; and she should be paid so as to be able to afford to have her dresses made for her. Any light employment for the hands, such as knitting, which does not engross attention, and which can be put down and taken up at any moment, is all very well. The head-nurse is in her room, adjoining the ward, and she is understood to have her eye on what is going on, and to be ready to be applied to in any difficulty; but a good night-nurse is anxious, and usually able, to carry her charge through the quiet hours without disturbance to the sleepers around.

The best authorities recommend a uniform dress among the nurses of each hospital—the head-nurses being distinguished by some one article, such as a different cap, &c. Such a plan would secure the main requisites of nursing apparel—its noiselessness, its propriety, its wearing quality, cleanliness, convenience, &c. Each nurse should have a room to herself; nothing can be worse than the plan of putting them all into a dormitory, as used to be done, and too probably is still, in some places. It is said, and I fear the statement cannot be denied, that the night-nurses have, in some establishments, to get into the beds just left by the day-nurses, so that the beds are made to do double service, and are never

properly aired. A steady resistance to this, as to any other real and unnecessary hardship, would soon procure a reform, for the nurses at present are strong enough in the demand for their services, to protect themselves. One of the things which they ought to refuse, in private houses, and in hospitals alike, is to spend their strength in fetching and carrying coals, water, &c. In the wards of hospitals, there is a nurse whose first business is the scrubbing and cleaning, keeping up the fires, and bringing in the meals, and she actually nurses only in the intervals of this sort of work; but the fetching and carrying outside the ward can be just as well done by persons who cannot nurse.

Both sets of nurses should conscientiously spend some of their time, when off duty, in the open air. It is a great advantage to them when there is an airing-ground, garden, or field attached to the building; but whether there is or not, they should go out and walk where they can see most open sky and green earth. The day-nurses have, or ought to have, a room where they may take their meals in company, which is much better than the way which some, and especially the night-nurses, seem to prefer, of providing little messes for themselves, to eat at their own fancy, and either in the ward or in their bedrooms. It is better for health and spirits that several should sit down together to a joint of meat and a pudding. They need this cheerfulness all the more for the impossibility, in any well-managed hospital, of permitting the visits of the nurses' friends. It is better to give the women a few hours periodically, than to afford temptation to them to admit strangers within the walls, with the appearance, at least, of distracting them from their duty. Where they have not this boon, they ought to have a complete fortnight in the year for a thorough holiday, without reduction of pay. The plan is found to answer well, by its effects on health and spirits; and it is politic also to extend some such indulgence when the time comes for the younger nurses to experience the *hospital languor*, as the peculiar affection is called which every professional nurse has to pass through. Whether it be all bodily or partly mental, the depression is painful and incapacitating, and should be treated by timely change of air and scene, if the poor woman is to be saved to the profession, for many succumb entirely, and turn to some other employment, concluding that nursing disagrees with their health. If she gets over it, during a timely holiday, and returns to business, she will rejoice afterwards that she did not give way too soon.

As for the rest, the employment has a good deal of variety in it, and only too much interest. The heaviest responsibility is saved by the universal rule of incessant and absolute obedience to orders; and thus, when once the natural recoil from witnessing pain is forgotten in the interest of the occupation, the profession is felt to be a very good one, and preferable to any other course open to women of narrow means and scanty education. For more highly-cultivated women, it would be better still. As for the salary, it is, I believe, from twenty pounds a year upwards in civil hospitals. In the great military hospitals, it starts from thirty pounds, and rises with length of service, though all wants are supplied, and there is a pension at last. Among the pupils of the Nightingale Fund, the lowest salary yet obtained in subsequent practice is twenty pounds.

This brings us to the practical question, how young women are to set about becoming nurses?

It must be understood that neither the Nightingale Fund nor any other agency can attempt to supply directly the national need of good nurses, nor a hundredth part of the demand. If we consider that even the great hospitals are obliged to put up with bad servants of this class, or overwork the good ones, or injure the patients, we may form some conception of the grievance. In private life, we all know what the thankfulness is when a trained nurse can be had at any cost from any institution, under any name. Many thousands would be welcomed to-morrow by the domestic classes of the country. Then there are the workhouses. Each union infirmary ought to be served by a trained nurse, or by several; and each of those infirmaries should, like the great hospitals, be a school for pupil-nurses, furnished by the workhouse schools. Much of the responsibility of the guardians and of the Poor-law Board will be relieved when this arrangement becomes feasible, which it is not yet, for want of the trained nurses; and they fall short for want of schools and trainers; and these last fall short for want of candidates for the profession. I can only refer in the briefest way to the demand from our dependencies in all parts of the globe, where qualified nurses would make their fortunes speedily, and find the heartiest of welcomes. Such a dearth as this cannot be met by any immediate effort; and what the trustees of the Nightingale Fund aim at, is to send out the greatest number of women qualified to train others, as well as to serve in person. If there was any general desire throughout the country to enter this profession, there would be whole companies of young women ready and eager to learn, wherever one of the Nightingale nurses appeared. Meantime, during the interval of ignorance and apathy which must come to an end sooner or later, the Fund is doing all the good it can. As I said before, the probationers, become qualified nurses, are bound to serve for five years from leaving St Thomas's in hospitals or in union infirmaries; and both during that term and afterwards, it is hoped that each of them may form a centre of instruction, so that the education may spread over the whole country.

It should be understood that the number of probationers is not necessarily limited by the income of the Nightingale Fund. Plenty of well-to-do people are at all times willing to pay the expenses of pupil-nurses, if only the pupils could be found. In each hospital, the number of learners must of course be determined by the number of patients, as a superabundance of nurses is injurious to the sick; and at present, during the transitional state of St Thomas's Hospital, the number of probationers, supported by the Fund and by private aid, is probably sufficient, if the quality is good. But the managers can always afford direction and encouragement when the right sort of women present themselves, and it may be hoped that every year will enlarge the number and the scope of the schools. We already hear of a bishop here, and a hospital there, and trustees and churches and rich men and women elsewhere, instituting schools of nursing; and when once the best sort of candidates appear in sufficient numbers, there will be some prospect of good days for the sick, and of easier minds for their doctors and their friends.

It is understood that the Nightingale Fund has recently sent, and is sending, large companies of trained nurses to Liverpool and Manchester. If the right sort of applicants sought advice and guidance, no doubt they would obtain it, if they could not wait for vacancies. The candidates should be from twenty-five to thirty-five years of age, of well-attested health, and of spotless character. They must be women of some natural ability—women of considerable power of observation, of common sense, and activity of mind and habits. These, and a womanly kindness of temper, are essentials. If the special aptitude for the treatment of sickness and wounds, which is not unusual among women, is added, there is nothing which a candidate so endowed may not aspire to in her profession. But she has much to go through first.

The Fund affords a gratuitous training in nursing in two institutions—St Thomas's Hospital for general nursing, and King's College Hospital for midwifery nursing. In the one case, candidates must apply to Mrs Wardroper, the matron at St Thomas's Hospital; and in the other, to either Mrs Wardroper, or Miss Jones, the superintendent of St John's House. If approved, in regard to age, health, character, and intelligence, the candidate enters on trial for a month; and if she stays on, she becomes trained for service in a year. She is free from care; for, besides board, lodging, and instruction, she has her outer dress (uniform) and a quarterly payment, rising from two pounds to three pounds the quarter, so as to make the sum for the year ten pounds. She must stay out her year, unless under very exceptional circumstances, and of course she is subject to dismissal at any time for misconduct; but if she learns and serves well, she will have earned an entry upon the register of certified nurses, and she is secure of her future maintenance, as far as human affairs are secure at all. Moreover, at the end of her first year's service in any hospital, she is entitled to a gratuity from the Fund of three pounds; and if of a higher order of efficiency, of five pounds. I have already said that the lowest hospital salary thus far received by any of this school of nurses is twenty pounds.

The professional officers of the hospital give lectures to the probationers; the head-nurses train them; and the matron superintends the training and their whole conduct. They learn how to do everything needful, from making the bed to keeping a sinking patient alive by feeding the flame of life from moment to moment. They learn all about sick-cookery, and how to keep the most helpless sufferers clean, and how to feed, and to raise and prop up; and how to reduce all fatigues to the very least possible; and how to obviate sores, and to dress them; and how to apply all the remedies ordered—blisters, leeches, poultices, and all the rest of it. If of good faculty, they learn something more important than even these things—to understand the patient's condition during the absence of the doctor, and to report it to him faithfully and intelligently. They must have an account ready of the effect of medicine and of food, of the state of the skin, the pulse, the bodily functions, the mental clearness, the appetite, sleep, &c. The patient's chance often depends as much on the intelligent observation of the nurse as on the science and skill of the doctor.

Of such candidates as offer, a selection is made for probation. Of such probationers as there are, most will probably remain ordinary nurses, well paid, and valued as far as they go, but not destined to attain any distinction. Here and there, it may be hoped, one and another will be pointed out by the authorities as qualified to be head-nurses; and possibly, among hundreds, some one may disclose the capability of being a matron, or trainer of nurses, who are to train in their turn. Meantime, the difficulty is really nothing short of a great misfortune—the difficulty of having to place unfit women in posts of high responsibility and importance, and of having to tolerate ordinary nurses too like the stock hired nurse of fiction; while a multitude of women who are by nature made for the position, are toiling and starving in some ungenial occupation, or unable to get employed at all. It will be a great marvel to our children's children that such a state of things could exist, a quarter of a century after Mrs Fry opened the first school of nursing in England, and ten years after Florence Nightingale returned from the Crimea.

LADY FLAVIA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LORD LYNN'S WIFE.'

CHAPTER XXXIX.—WHAT THEY FOUND IN THE TANGLE.

THE colonel was too sanguine. Basil Royston, prisoner *au secret*, and once a captain in Her Majesty's service, had not confessed all. To do so, would have been contrary to his nature; and he had borne much before he would admit anything. At first, the man's instinct of self-preservation had steered him in his resolution of keeping silence. Again and again had the magistrate appointed to examine him recoiled baffled, wearied out by the elastic pertinacity of the culprit's resistance. In the French system, as is well known, every servant of the state, from the turnkey to M. the President in his velvet cap, does all he can to bring about a conviction. The obstinate elements are twofold—the prisoner and the jury; and as the authorities have the prisoner under lock and key, and can bully, starve, and annoy him or her for any time, or to any extent, their best chance is with the prisoner. A villain in a French jail is not perhaps much to be pitied; but when an innocent person gets impounded there by mistake—a white sheep among the black sheep—it is not the fault of the officials if the intrusive fleece is not painted as sable as Sin itself.

Captain Basil Royston was not innocent, but he gave a great deal of trouble to those who desired to prove him guilty. He would not open his own mouth to betray himself, so he was either silent, or he told lies. Of the two alternatives, the authorities of France infinitely prefer that a prisoner shall tell lies, for then they cross-examine, question, and confute him; and if they can do no more, can at least reproduce his fictions with damaging effect before the jury.

But they prefer to entrap a culprit into labyrinths of confession, explanation, and hypothesis; and the

pen of the *greffier* never goes so glibly over the thin blue legal paper as when the criminal is floundering through a quagmire of statement and retraction. Basil Royston proved less malleable than had been expected. Whether he was very cunning or very shallow, they could not decide, but what he said was hardly worth writing down. His rhodomontades were wearisome, but they led to no good end; and sometimes he was refractory, and would say nothing. They had put him on bread and water. Again, they had tried other tactics, and had set wine and brandy before him at meal-times. He was wary, and for the first time in his life would not drink.

Meanwhile, his mother, Brand's widow, kept fast to her purpose. Not a single syllable that could injure her son could be drawn from her lips. They could not make anything of poor Mrs Royston. For once, her feeble mind, braced by the deep instinct of maternal love, was equal to the occasion. She answered all questionings with an assertion that she knew nothing of any conspiracy, and that Basil Royston had done no harm. Threats were wasted on her, persuasions failed. She was strong in her wish to save her son, and was regardless of the consequences which her obstinacy might bring upon herself.

Often, as the Judge of Instruction, returning foiled from a long interview with one or other of the prisoners, reported progress to the public prosecutor—often did those two props and pillars of French law sigh over the meddlesome philanthropy that had abolished the use of material means for unlocking the lips of a reluctant witness. Two turns of the rack would have brought that *mauvais gars* of an English captain to his senses. Or, if the rack were voted barbarous and medieval, why should not a little unobtrusive thumb-screw—a *pouicette*—extract the truth by a trifling dislocation of the lesser joints, a thing hardly worth mentioning in an anatomical point of view; or, if the humanitarians of the day would not hear reason, there were military punishments—the strappado, the wooden-horse, the collar of durance, all abolished during the revolutionary mania of '89.

But although torture may not be applied to a prisoner's body in France, his mind is given up to whatever anguish the ingenuity of his guardians may care to inflict. And on a sudden, Basil Royston had given way; his stubbornness had relaxed. He had made a sort of bargain with the Judge of Instruction, and he had told something enough to ruin others as well as himself.

'Search in the Tangle—we called the most neglected part of the garden of the Château des Roches by that name—and between the summer-house and the old sun-dial, you will find the proof you have been looking for.'

'We are going over to Grésnez—Mr Charles and I—in the Procureur's carriage, to be present at the search,' said Colonel Ford to the detectives; 'perhaps you had better be there also.'

There was no exultation in the old soldier's tone, no elation, or even any excitement in his manner. He looked weary and depressed. The news that he had received that day, the news of Captain Royston's confession, was bad news. True, he would soon be able to quit France, and there would be an end of the irksome business in which he had become involved. But he was averse to anything that could give pain to Amy's

gentle nature, and he felt assured that her hopes with regard to her unfortunate friend were doomed to disappointment. The policemen understood in a moment the full purport of the recent avowal; their eyes met, and M. Durbec, no longer Captain Goulôt of the merchant service, nodded his head, in token that he wished Sergeant Skinner, late Mr Wright of Liverpool, to speak.

'Colonel,' said the London detective in his grave respectful manner, 'you always were of opinion, were you not, that this would be the end of it, early or late, and that we should never see the poor young lady alive?'

The colonel winced a little. 'I never said so,' he answered, almost confusedly.

'Why, no,' rejoined Sergeant Skinner in a meditative tone; 'certainly not. But then, sir, that was out of nothing else than consideration for Miss Ford's feelings. The young lady had set her heart on getting her dear friend back safe and sound, out of the sorrow and captivity in which she fancied her to be kept against her will, that it would have been cruel to persuade her to the contrary before it was quite certain;' and the sergeant rubbed his broad palm very slowly over his chin, as if he were shaving himself without a razor, as he thoughtfully added: 'Quite certain; quite—quite certain!'

'Well, I admit,' returned Colonel Ford in a low and hasty voice, 'that I always had darker suspicions than those that I openly avowed. I kept them to myself. But I have reason to believe the Procureur entertained similar notions, and that you, too, have always been of the same way of thinking.'

'Certainly,' said Sergeant Skinner.

'Monsieur is right!' chimed in M. Durbec, with a grimace of assent.

'Well, I thought as Amy did!' said Charles Ford stoutly. 'That Brand Royston—poor devil—was a violent old savage, but I never thought so ill of him as to believe he would commit so cowardly and treacherous a crime as you are hinting at. I don't believe it now. The old fellow had too much manliness in him to shed the innocent blood of an unoffending young girl like—'

'Hush!' said the colonel nervously, as Amy opened one of the windows of the little sitting-room above, and leaned out to ask why her father and cousin chose to stay out there in the cold, and whether she was to be excluded altogether from the council that they were holding on the door-steps.

The colonel and his nephew went in; but the detectives had to make their report at the Palais de Justice, and could not spare time to enter.

'*Cependant*, it is of much importance,' whispered M. Durbec hastily, in English, in Colonel Ford's ear, 'that Miss Ford should pronounce upon the authenticity of the handwriting of Miladi yonder, and also should see the portrait. Will you be so good as not to tell her any evil news, until I have submitted these proofs for her inspection, *whatever* we may find to-night.'

Colonel Ford and Charles had to smile, and talk of indifferent matters, and dissimulate as best they might the shadow that darkened their minds, as they thought over the probable discovery of what they most dreaded to find in the spot indicated by Basil Royston. They could both say with perfect truth that they were ignorant of the precise results

of the expedition from which the detectives had just returned; and they could add, with equal truth, that they had an appointment that evening at the Palais de Justice, when, no doubt, they would learn the exact state of affairs. They tried to appear confident, easy, cheerful; but men are poor dissemblers; it is only a woman who can wear a perfectly natural mask of smiles, while her heart is aching and her brain on fire with painful thought; and when the colonel and his nephew went to keep their appointment, Amy threw herself on the sofa and sobbed aloud. She had kept back her tears for hours; they flowed freely now.

'They are hiding the truth—the worst—from me, out of sheer kindness, I know,' said the weeping girl; 'but I read it in their faces. I shall never see her again—never, never, never again!'

Carriage after carriage rolled away from Versailles, along the darkling road that led to St Germain and Grèsnéz-Vignoble. The lamps flashed yellow as they made their way past the interminable rows of poplars, tall trees some of them, others poor weaklings, no thicker than the puny *arbres de liberté* that they plant in Paris when the blood is still wet in the streets, and when the short-lived popular triumph is at its height. As night fell darker and deeper, the rays of the carriage-lamps seemed all the brighter for the gathering gloom. On they went, through hamlets of blue or yellow cottages, all with gaudy shutters of green, all drawn up in formal lines, like soldiers at drill, but with a certain air of comfort, and thrift, and plenty about them, for all that—on, skirting the town of St Germain without entering it, on to Grèsnéz-Vignoble, and its mill, and its church, and its bleaching-works, and the smithy, and the bridge, and the grim iron gates of the dilapidated Château des Roches.

There the carriages stopped. The Procureur Impérial alighted, and so did Colonel Ford, his nephew, M. Durbec, Sergeant Skinner, and some four or five workmen and agents of police, who had been brought from Versailles to assist in the search; also a tall thin man in black, a doctor from the hospital at Versailles, on whose discretion the authorities could depend. The château had been in the keeping of the police ever since the fatal affray, and now, by appointment, the commissary from St Germain, with a party of his subordinates, was ready to receive M. le Procureur. Leroux, the brigadier of gendarmerie, was there too with two of his men.

'*Entrons!* let us get this business over as soon as may be. The procès-verbal will take up some time,' said M. Duvilleurs-Hardouin.

The gates were opened, and the whole assemblage poured into the demesne of the ruinous old country-house, the pile above them towering black and shapeless on that moonless night.

'Light the torches,' commanded the commissary in a suppressed voice.

All spoke below their breath. Each one present, even of the rough workmen with pick and spade, trod softly as the group advanced deeper into the shadow of the trees. One of the agents of police from St Germain acted as guide. He had some acquaintance with the old gardener, whose duty it had been to cultivate the portion of garden-ground on which some vegetables were still grown, and he knew whereabouts the decayed summer-house stood.

The torches were now kindled, and they threw

a flaring light, now of a smoky yellow, now of blotted crimson, and again of dusky orange, or blood red upon the thickets, the black earth, the ivy-grown trees, the lawn, on which the long grass grew like the unshorn hair of a madman crouching in his lair. The night-wind sighed and murmured among the bushes, and the dripping of the heavy drops of wet that clung to the boughs, for there had been rain that day, was distinctly heard, so painful was the silence. Stumbling over roots and fragments of rock, pushing aside briars and fallen branches that barred the path, at last the searchers reached the spot where the old sun-dial stood, with moss clinging to its white stonework. There, too, was the crazy old summer-house, with its broken roof, paintless walls, and door hanging by one rusted hinge—the emblem of desolation. There the rank grass grew the tallest, there the weeds and overgrown shrubs were thickest, and the neglected vegetation lay like a jungle, unkempt, unpruned.

'This is the place they called the Tangle. *C'est ici, sans doute!*' said the Procureur, surveying the scene through his gold-rimmed glasses.

'Dig here!' ordered the commissary, pointing to a spot between the sun-dial and the summer-house; and instantly the workmen began to plunge their spades into the soft soil. They toiled in silence, delving carefully, and throwing up heap after heap of the black mould. The others stood beside them, peering down into the trench, which every moment grew deeper. A strange wild scene it was, that uncared-for nook in the deserted garden, with the ill-omened work that went on there, and the pale anxious faces of the bystanders, looking all the paler for the glare of the torch-light. The shifty, restless gleam played upon the steel scabbards and martial accoutrements of the gendarmes, on the dark clothes and white eager countenances of the spectators, on the tri-coloured scarf of the commissary, and on the sturdy men in blouses, who were standing now up to their waists in what seemed a freshly-opened grave. They worked, and worked, but nothing was found. There were no signs, even, that the earth had been recently disturbed. The Procureur's brows began to contract in a frown that boded no good to the prisoner, whose confession had apparently been disproved by facts.

'He has deceived us,' muttered the public prosecutor; '*tant pis pour lui!*'

The men were leaning on their spades to take breath; they were getting discouraged. The sub-soil had been reached, and no discovery had rewarded their toil.

'If I may advise,' said the voice of Durbec in the commissary's ear, 'I would say, try elsewhere. A little to the left, near the sun-dial, the turf looks withered, *mon commissaire!*'

The commissary turned to the men. '*Mes braves,*' he said, 'Monsieur Durbec here will tell you where to dig.—*Un fin limier,* Monsieur Durbec, is it not so, Monsieur?' This to the Procureur Impérial, who nodded approvingly.

'Dig, my lads—here where the grass is short and brown—here where the rushes are broken, from the great stone up to the tuft of daisies, and be careful what you do with your spades, *camarades!*' cried Durbec, taking the command. The workmen obeyed him willingly.

'One sees well that the turf has been cut before,

hein?' said one of the labourers, as he lifted a spadeful of the black mould.

'Yes, yes, one sees it,' returned the others; and they shovelled up the heavy black mould with renewed vigour.

For a minute or two they dug on, then came a pause.

'*Tiens!*' exclaimed one of the men; 'I touched something.'

In a moment more that something was laid bare. A dead, white human hand and wrist, white, wan, bloodless, more like the model of a hand exquisitely moulded in pure wax, than a real hand, suddenly shewed itself among the fibrous roots and the black clods of tenacious earth.

'Ah-h-h!' exclaimed the workman, dropping his spade, and wiping the clammy moisture from his brow; 'she lies here, then, for certain. *Diantre!* it makes me feel ill, comrades;' and the man sat down at the edge of the trench, and looked paler than all the rest of that pale group. He was a stout fellow of forty, and had smelt powder at Solferino and in Kabylia; for the three workmen were all picked as good and steady men, and all had 'served,' as is the case with most of the best French artisans and labourers. But the sight of the dead white hand, so small, and so little changed by decay, was too much for the nerves of the ex-Zouave at first. One of the agents gave him some brandy from a flask, and he got up and took up his spade reluctantly. 'If it had been a man—ay, or a woman of the *canaille* of brown Bedouins; but a white arm like that— Laugh if you will, *messieurs*, but it put me in mind of my own dear young sister, little Rosalie, lying these twenty-two years in the *cimetière* of Alençon;' and he delved on. Nobody was inclined to laugh; every face was serious and anxious, for death comes home to all hearts. A moment more, and the spade struck with a dull thud upon a soft substance that was not earth. The mould was scraped away, and a dark heap, a something shapeless, wrapped in woollen rags and a frayed old boat-cloak, the dull red lining of which had turned to purple, was exposed. At the commissary's orders, the men stooped and opened the wrappings. The result had been anticipated long before, but a shudder ran through the crowd, and loud exclamations of horror, anger, indignation, broke the silence of the still night.

'Poor lamb! poor murdered lamb! The curse of Heaven and the curse of the poor on the villain that has done this deed! Look at her young white face—look at her limbs; how she lies as if she were only asleep! *Pauvre petite demoiselle*, the butchers who killed her must have had hard hearts; *ça!*'

All the men standing round that unhallowed grave were not good, or honest, or compassionate in everyday life; but they were all moved now. There were none whose faces were not softened, there were few whose eyes were not dim, as they looked down at what lay disclosed in the trench beneath their feet.

The corpse of a young girl, in the first years of early womanhood, white, and wan, and waxen, with its dead young face upturned, and one arm outstretched beyond the coverings that had been hastily wrapped around the passive form. The night-black hair looked the darker for its contrast with the awful pallor of the face. There was no

shroud, only a sheet hurriedly and carelessly sewn together. The attitude was that of repose rather than of death; the features were calm, and the peaty soil had probably conduced to arrest the course of decay. There she lay, she whom they had come to seek. The search was over; the Tangle had given up its dead.

M. Durbec drew the portrait from his coat-pocket, and examined it for a moment, then glanced again at the blanched awful face below. 'There is no doubt now,' he said in a loud clear voice; 'a foul crime has been committed. The body that lies here is that of the true Lady Flavia Clare, of Lord Mortlake's daughter, and of her who was a guest, *par malheur*, under this accursed roof; and this grave was dug by murderous hands, red from the recent deed. Lift her, men, but gently and steadily, poor thing!'

No need to tell the men to be gentle. If she had been their own sister or child, dead or dying, they could not have raised her helpless form from the earth more tenderly, or borne her more reverently and slowly on through the dank garden to the ruinous house, where they laid her on the same couch that had once received the mutilated remains of Brand Royston. The doctor from the hospital made a rapid examination of the corpse. 'I find no trace of violence,' he said. 'But for the suspicious signs of the secret interment, which, of course, denote guilt, I should see nothing to mark the case as one of assassination. These were no vulgar murderers, Monsieur le Commissaire. I assure you, Monsieur le Procureur, that I can do no more till daylight. It will be an affair of tests, and reagents, and delicate experiments, and I should much prefer to call in the assistance of messieurs my colleagues.'

So it was settled. A guard was left all night at the château to watch over the dead; and the carriages rolled swiftly back towards Versailles, the lamps flaring with yellow light over the empty fields and lonely roads, and the tramp of the horses disturbing the sleeping village streets. 'We have Miladi now,' said M. Durbec to Sergeant Skinner; '*bien sûr*, we have her, were she twice as beautiful, and wicked, and crafty as she is.'

CHAPTER XL.—M. DUVILLERS-HARDOUN FEELS SURE OF HIS PROMOTION.

There was no more secrecy now. Amy Ford knew the truth, which, indeed, her father had been in a manner constrained to tell her when the searchers returned to Versailles long after midnight, and the colonel started as he saw Amy's pale anxious face at the head of the stairs. He told her of the discovery, softening down the details as best he could; and Miss Ford gave him no reason to repent his impulse of candour. She wept, indeed, but it was with a chastened sorrow; and when the colonel told her how calm and peaceful was the aspect of the fair dead face on which the torches had thrown their fierce light, Amy smiled through her tears.

'I know how good and innocent Flavia was, papa,' she said softly. 'Now I know all that can be known, I feel less unhappy about her than when I fancied her among cruel people somewhere. My dear is beyond the reach of grief, and fear, and pain now. Her pure soul is with the angels. May I see her once again, papa? I should like to see her, if you will let me.'

Colonel Ford shook his head. 'It would be better, pet, that you should be spared a sight which would only distress you. The surgeon said that no time must be lost in— But why should we dwell on details that can only give pain. Take my assurance, darling, that she seems to have died without suffering. There has been foul-play, of course; this is no natural death. But her end must have been peaceful, and without any sharp pang that could leave its traces on her poor young face. Good-night, now, Amy. We shall soon be at home in England, I hope, and all this will seem like a feverish dream that we are glad to forget.'

An hour before noon, the Procureur Impérial paid a visit to Colonel Ford's lodgings. He brought with him the two detectives, as well as a *huissier*, who carried his chief's portfolio, well stuffed with papers, bound in green morocco, and lettered *Dossier de l'affaire Royston*. The library of every public prosecutor is in great part composed of these lugubrious volumes of mingled manuscript and printed matter, each of which has its own mournfully monotonous history of crime and punishment attached to it.

Always urbane, M. Duvillers-Hardouin was now imbued with a tenfold politeness. He rubbed his sleek soft hands together, his eyes beamed benignly through his gold-mounted spectacles, and his mouth had the satisfied look that we notice in a cat that paws out her paws of victory over her captured prey. Amy turned her eyes from the lawyer's parchment face, the sallow pallor of which was mottled now by a flush of unwholesome crimson, conjured up by the excitement of success. Charles Ford contemplated him for a moment as he scattered his civil speeches broadcast among the company, and then walked to the window to conceal the disgust which he knew must be but too plainly legible on his honest English countenance. This leering, soft-spoken, legal ogre was too much for him, and made him sick of his profession, that could rear up such a carpet tiger as M. Duvillers-Hardouin. But the colonel looked on the exulting lawyer with greater philosophy. He saw the stealthy feline savagery, the unscrupulous adaptation of means to the end in view, beneath the varnish and gloss of that smooth outside, to the full as plainly as his nephew could do. But he accepted the public prosecutor as a hard fact, that the existence of other hard facts, in the shape of thieves and assassins, rendered in some shape a necessity.

'Will Mademoiselle oblige me by inspecting this sample of handwriting, obtained by the ingenuity of our admirable confederate, Monsieur Skinner?' said the Procureur, as he selected from the contents of the portfolio the form which the London detective had procured at the telegraph-office in Chartley. 'The signature is that of Emma Jones; but there is no doubt as to the position occupied by the person who sent the message to France. Is that a handwriting that Mademoiselle knows?'

'Certainly not,' said Amy. 'I never, to my knowledge, saw it before.'

'Ben! You have probably in your possession some lines of the writing of your friend, Miladi Flavia Clare?' pursued the Procureur.

Amy rose silently, left the room, and returned with a book, on the fly-leaf of which were written the words: 'Amy Ford, with many happy returns of the day, from her loving sister, Flavia Clare.'

It was difficult to look upon those few simple words and be wholly unmoved. The ink was still black and unfaded, but the hand of the writer was stiff and chill, and would hold the pen never more. But the public prosecutor's dim gaze waxed the brighter as he scanned the written lines slowly and critically. 'All goes for the best, Mademoiselle,' he said: 'there is no similarity. The experts from Paris, if the advocate for the prisoner should summon them, could never pretend that the same person traced the characters of both.—The portrait, Monsieur Durbec, *s'il vous plaît*.'

The detective drew out the miniature, opened the case, and laid it on the table.

Amy bent over it. 'I do not know this face,' she said. 'It is the likeness of some child. O yes, now I know it—it is poor Flavia. I cannot bear this any more.' And she turned her streaming eyes and sorrow-stricken face from the hard lawyer, and hastily left the room, Charles Ford springing to the door to exchange a whispered word with her on the threshold.

'It's a confounded shame. I'm sick of the whole affair; and I don't envy you your position and its duties, Monsieur, I assure you,' said the colonel's nephew with English plainness of diction, but in intelligible Anglo-French, and with a significant look of anything but admiration for the Procureur Impérial.

The public prosecutor smiled with polite scorn. 'Monsieur is young,' he said. 'By the time his talents elevate him to the dignity of judge, Monsieur will have learned that we cannot always indulge the tender sensibilities of our nature. Monsieur le Colonel I am sure will agree with me that duty must precede sentiment. And now, since we are for the moment deprived of the society of Miss Ford, may I beg of her father, in the interests of justice, to ask Mademoiselle one question. The eyes of the portrait—I wish to ask if she sees anything peculiar in them? Has the artist made any mistake—I mean, in colour?'

When this request was translated to Colonel Ford, he somewhat reluctantly undertook the office of going to seek Amy in her room, to make the apparently trivial inquiry suggested by the public prosecutor. He soon returned, with the miniature in his hand, which he replaced on the table.

'The portrait, allowing for the difference of years, seems to be a very faithful one,' said the colonel. 'My daughter sees nothing remarkable in it. The eyes are dark—black, in fact—they match well with the dark hair and the complexion.' 'Ah! I thought so,' said the Procureur, rubbing his hands together, and smiling blandly.—'Bertrand, call them up *d'en bas*.'

Bertrand was the name of the huissier. That useful dark-clothed familiar disappeared, and soon returned, followed by a gendarme, in whose safe-keeping was a stout young peasant-woman, with large-eared cap, gold cross and earrings, and a scarlet handkerchief pinned across her bosom. 'You are the former servant of *feu* Monsieur Royston?' asked the Procureur.

'At your service, Monsieur,' answered Grosse Jeanne, surveying the company with rustic curiosity under her eyelashes.

'You remember, Mademoiselle, the niece of Madame Royston, Adela Burt by name?' was the next question.

'*Ma foi*, Monsieur, I have said so a dozen times;

and a hard thing it is that an honest girl like myself should be kept from getting her livelihood with her ten fingers to listen to such *sornettes*, saving the respect due to Monsieur, and the Emperor, and the Maire.'

'Of what colour were Miss Adela Burt's eyes?'

'*Dame!*' said Grosse Jeanne, twisting her apron backwards and forwards, 'I never thought of it before. Blue; yes, they were blue. *Un beau bleu du ciel!* Pretty eyes, too, though it was droll they were not black, when she had such heaps of fine hair, *noir du jais*.'

'Monsieur Durbec, and you, *cher* Monsieur Skinner, you both of you at different times saw the woman who, at the house of the Comte de Mortlake, takes the name and fills the place of Miladi Flavia—of what colour were her eyes?'

'Blue!' said the sergeant.

'I have but to repeat what Monsieur Skinner has said: the person of whom we speak has blue eyes—*beaux yeux* also, and the more remarkable for the profusion of her dark hair, messieurs,' said M. Durbec.

'Then,' said the public prosecutor, 'I think the last thin veil of disguise, messieurs, is torn away. Already I have received intelligence that this morning the body of that ill-fated lady has been recognised: *Seur Nanon*, and three Sisters of the convent of Our Lady of Carmel, as well as Dr Perinet, depose positively to its identity; and now, we wait only that the sword of justice may fall the more surely on the guilty. In spite of all the craft and cunning of the wretches implicated in this infernal plot, we now know all. She who has alone profited by the crime committed—she who has robbed the dead of her very name and place in the world's favour, is the missing niece of Madame Royston. This monster of depravity—this tigress in a woman's form—is detected at last. Long suspected, her sin has found her at last. The false Lady Flavia, the impostor who has taken her victim's place under the roof of Harbledown, is Adela Burt. Adela Burt it is whom French law demands from the English government, to pay the penalty of that night's work at the Château des Roches.'

M. Duvillers-Hardouin spoke strongly, fiercely; he had dropped his affected *bonhomie*, and his utterance and gestures were those of a hard, merciless accuser, who sternly asks blood for blood. Very little more was said; and those who had been gathered in Colonel Ford's apartments, dispersed gradually, the Procureur taking his leave with a cold politeness of those whom he well knew to have scant sympathy with his prospects.

'That young creature that was at the Fancy Fair at Slochester!' exclaimed the colonel, half incredulous as yet: 'she is an impostor, I grant, and deserves to be punished; but surely she ought not to die; yet the Procureur meant what he said. They will let off that cur of a young Royston, and send her to the scaffold; and yet, if she was mixed up in the crime at all, she must have been a mere tool of that savage old uncle of hers, that'

'The extradition warrant will be granted to-morrow, or the next day; there is no doubt about it, colonel,' said Sergeant Skinner, putting his head in at the door: 'we start for Paris at once, and then for London. The arrest must be made now or never.'

OCCASIONAL NOTE.

ARE THERE OTHER INHABITED WORLDS?

In consequence of the publication of a small volume by an eminent Cambridge authority a few years ago, a controversy arose and raged for some time as to the possible inhabitation of the other bodies of space by beings in any degree analogous to those which dwell upon earth. Since then, science has been making advances, and all of them that bear on this question are unequivocally in favour of its affirmative side.

We formerly inferred from La Place's theory of the formation of the solar system, that its chemical elements were throughout the same. To the same purport was the isolated fact, that the meteorites which occasionally fall from space upon the surface of the earth, are composed of metallic elements, all of which are found in the composition of our planet. So far, of course, this identity of constitution favoured the idea that other globes might sustain inhabitants like our own. It was desirable, however, that we should have some direct proof that other bodies were composed like our own. This has been supplied in a wonderful manner by the experiments of Bunsen, Kirchhoff, and others, with the spectroscope. The spectrum thrown through a prism from metals subjected to a dissolving heat being found to contain certain bright lines, each characteristic of the particular metal under combustion, it was a brilliant triumph to science when the solar spectrum was found to mark the presence of iron and some other metals in the sun's atmosphere. Nor is this all, for, more recently, the spectroscope has been applied to the fixed stars, and there also the presence of some of the earth's well-known metals has been in like manner detected. It is a wide wide space to travel over in search of knowledge—millions of millions of miles—but man, with a little simple instrument and an inductive mind, has accomplished the journey.

The *tour de force* of the Cambridge authority referred to, in seeking to establish the earth as the only inhabited planet, was the want of an atmosphere on the moon, inferring that no organic beings could there exist. If the moon, which is our next neighbour, the body most patent to our observation, is airless, waterless, and consequently a desert, what title have we to infer that other planets are inhabited? Very lately, however, Mr Nasmyth, who enjoys the distinction of knowing more of the moon than any other man on earth, has shewn plausible reasons for believing that this satellite, in consequence of its small size, has passed through progressive conditions through which our globe is also passing, and only prefigures what we are to come to. It is also proved that the hemisphere of the moon constantly presented to us, and which we alone know by sight, bulges to the extent of twenty-nine miles in front of the centre of gravity. On the remote side, which enjoys sun-light though not earth-light, there may be both air and water, and consequently organic life. The air and water of the satellite may be accumulated there, very much as the great masses of water are gathered near the poles of the earth, the similarly flattened parts of our planet.

The importance of the moon in this question has been much lessened during the last few years by the great increase of our knowledge respecting the surfaces of the primary planets. Our neighbour Mars has been examined with great care both in India and in England, and the whole subject of his conditions has been carefully summarised by Professor Phillips of Oxford. The white patches long ago observed at his poles, and thought to be snow, are now more decidedly believed to be such, for they are observed to enlarge and diminish with the seasons, just as polar snows do upon earth. There is also such an irregularity in their outline as implies irregularity of

the surface whereon they repose or (it may be) move. The spectroscope proves a depth of atmosphere not only capable of sustaining life, but of maintaining an amount of aqueous vapours such as might largely compensate for the less heat derived from the sun. Red and green variations are discerned on the surface of the planet, implying lands and seas, and one observer thinks he has discovered a chain of lakes in the antarctic region resembling that in North America. Polar snow-patches have lately been observed on Saturn, very much like those on Mars. On Saturn, too, and on Jupiter more especially, there is all the appearance of clouds as arranged by systematic atmospheric currents.

It will thus be seen that the appearances of parity of condition between the earth and other globes have of late years undergone a considerable increase, supporting the idea that there are other spheres of life besides our own. We know well that some of the conditions of other spheres are different from ours, particularly in the matter of the sun's heat; but we also know that even upon our own globe life exists under an immense variety of conditions: it is found on the land surface, in clear sunlight, and under ordinary atmospheric pressure, and it is found in the depths of the ocean, wholly in the dark, and under a superincumbent pressure of a ton and a half on the square inch. Such being the case, there is nothing to forbid our supposing that life may exist equally on Mercury, 'lost in the near effulgence' of the sun, and on Neptune, revolving so far from the centre of both light and heat. If in these widely-different regions, why not in the planets of other suns—in short, throughout the whole of that vast range of spheres which make up our imperfect conception of the universe?

MAY WEEDS AND MAY FLOWERS.

THE clouds that wait around the sun
Are prodigal and gay;
The only snow that winter's left
Is blooming on the May.

See how the blossom quivers now,
Stirred by the thrush's wing!
No, 'tis the new-born butterfly—
For lo! the flower takes wing.

The purple-veined geranium
Among the nettles grows;
And round the bramble's thorny chains
Blooms now the kindly rose.

The pimpernel in warning spreads
Its red-leaved calendar;
And round the ivy's snaky stem
The roots grow thick as fur.

The poppy shakes its sickle head
In mockery of the corn;
The cynic thistle spreads its spikes
With an ascetic scorn.

The bindweed, like a vagrant vine,
Though barren, loves to stray,
And clings with profitless embrace
To boughs that break away.

The daisies speckle white the turf;
The cowslips in the grass
Stretch fairy cups of gold to give
To beggars as they pass.

The birds, the heralds of the year,
Sing each a different tune,
Yet all unite and welcome in
That stately monarch—JUNE.